DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 322 308 CE 055 291

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TITLE Learning Support. 3. Devising Individual Learning Programmes.
INSTITUTION Further Education Unit, London (England).; Skill: National Bureau of Students with Disabilities, London (England).; Training Agency, London (England).
PUB DATE 89
NOTE 25p.; In: Learning Support. A Staff Development Resource Pack for Those Working with Learners Who Have Special Needs; see CE 055 287.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Continuing Education; Educational Improvement; Foreign Countries; *Individualized Instruction; Individual Needs; *Inservice Teacher Education; Mainstreaming; Media Adaptation; Needs Assessment; Postsecondary Education; *Program Design; Program Development; *Special Needs Students; *Staff Development; *Student Centered Curriculum; Teacher Student Relationship; Training
IDENTIFIERS *Great Britain

ABSTRACT

Designing individual learning programs is the subject of this document, one of 9 modules within an 11-unit resource pack designed to help trainers and postsecondary and continuing education staff meet the needs of special needs students in Great Britain. Having completed the module, staff should be able to: (1) describe the learner-centered approach; (2) outline the steps in designing an individual learning program; (3) describe ways to identify special needs; (4) list ways in which a course or program may be modified to meet special needs; (5) involve the learner in production of program plans; and (6) design individual programs for learners with special needs. The module contains two sections. Section 1 provides a rationale for individualizing learning programs and describes them as a means by which a learner-centered approach can be implemented. Section 2 describes the steps in designing such programs, including collecting and interpreting information; considering program aims and objectives in relation to learner characteristics, needs, and interests; preparing a provisional plan; negotiating with the learner; and monitoring progress. The module contains 11 exercises. (CML)

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LEARNING SUPPORT

DEVISING INDIVIDUAL LEARNING PROGRAMMES

CE 055291

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INTRODUCTION

All learners have individual needs, interests and abilities which affect their performance. It is important to identify the needs in order to plan and provide appropriate education/training. This is especially the case for learners with special educational/training needs. They may often require additional support and/or individual provision.

KEY QUESTIONS

- Am I treating the learner as an individual?
- Do I understand what learner-centredness means?
- Do I understand the relationship between:
  a) learner-centredness
  b) individual learning programmes?
- Have I the knowledge and techniques to recognise individual needs?
- Can I respond to individual needs?
- Can I produce an individual learning programme?

AIMS

- To develop an understanding of individual learning needs.
- To examine the implications of individual needs in planning appropriate programmes to meet them.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this element you should be able to:

- describe a learner-centred approach;
- describe what an individual learning programme is for;
- outline the steps in devising an individual learning programme;
- collect and interpret information in order to devise an individual programme plan;
- describe ways of identifying special education/training needs;
- produce a format for identifying needs;
- describe appropriate ways of recording information;
- list a range of aspects of the course/training programme which may be modified;
- prepare provisional programme plans;
- define negotiation;
- involve the learner in the production of the plan, through negotiation;
- describe the contracting process and policy in your establishment;
- draw up appropriate contracts;
- monitor progress in a positive way, encouraging the learners to be actively involved;
- identify any skills you need to develop in order to devise effective individual learning programmes;
- devise a personal action plan to achieve this development;
- devise individual programmes suitable for learners with special needs.

1. INDIVIDUAL LEARNING PROGRAMMES

RATIONALE

Why should you develop individual learning programmes?
What makes them particularly useful for learners with special education or training needs?

INDIVIDUAL LEARNING PROGRAMMES

Individual learning programmes:

- Allow you to cater for the variety of interests and needs that learners bring with them.
- Allow the learners to adopt the style that suits them best. They can use materials and resources which are individually tailored. Furthermore, they can progress at their own pace and work at their own level.
- Require the teacher or trainer to involve actively the learner in planning and delivery. The teacher's role is one of negotiator, offering support and guidance to help the learner actively to take responsiblility for his or her own learning.
- Are dependent on the relationship between the learner and teacher. It is crucial in this process. It makes demands on both parties, particularly of interpersonal communication skills such as listening, negotiating and contracting.
- Require listening, negotiation and contracting. But these activities do not need to take place on a one-to-one basis. Guidance and support may be offered individually, but much of it will take place in a group setting.
- Require collaborative working with colleagues in planning and delivery.

A LEARNER-CENTRED APPROACH

Individual learning programmes are a means by which a learner-centred approach can be implemented.

They have particular value for learners with special educational/training needs, because they can focus on the special, *extra* support required to make learning effective.

Ideally any planning will take into account the individual differences, needs and interests of the learners. However, in order to structure appropriate learning opportunities for learners with special needs, individual planning is *essential*.

EXERCISE 1. WHAT DOES LEARNER-CENTREDNESS MEAN?

Individual activity

This activity will help you consider how far you use a learner-centred approach in your work.

Try your hand at the following check-list.

CHECK-LIST

Do you give learners the opportunity to:

	Always	often	sometimes	never
• negotiate their own programme?	☐	☐	☐	☐
• set their own learning objectives?	☐	☐	☐	☐
• assess their own work?	☐	☐	☐	☐
• have a break when they need it?	☐	☐	☐	☐
• organise their own club?	☐	☐	☐	☐
• work in pairs if they choose?	☐	☐	☐	☐
• work independently?	☐	☐	☐	☐
• question the relevance of their work?	☐	☐	☐	☐
• assess your skills?	☐	☐	☐	☐
• discuss your organisation?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Do you:

• explain criteria you use when assessing?	☐	☐	☐	☐
• prefer to use no graded marking system?	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Talk to your learners individually about their progress?	☐	☐	☐	☐
• record attainment using a profile?	☐	☐	☐	☐
• encourage learners to keep a diary or log?	☐	☐	☐	☐
• cater for mixed abilities on an individual basis?	☐	☐	☐	☐
• encourage learners to help each other?	☐	☐	☐	☐
• undertake team teaching/training, working co-operatively, alongside other staff?	☐	☐	☐	☐
• produce integrated tasks with other staff?	☐	☐	☐	☐
• liaise with other staff on learner progress?	☐	☐	☐	☐
• alter the learning setting to suit the method you use?	☐	☐	☐	☐
• know all the learners' names?	☐	☐	☐	☐
• spend time talking about their lives and interests?	☐	☐	☐	☐

How did you get on?

If most of your ticks were in the 'always' or 'often' boxes then you are probably adopting a learner-centred approach.

From these questions you should have some idea of the activities and processes which are typically associated with learner-centred approaches.

It is not appropriate to define them any further here. If you wish to explore the meaning further, the references at the end of this element will help you to do so.

The next step is to consider the skills necessary to devise and implement individual learning programmes.

WHAT IS AN INDIVIDUAL LEARNING PROGRAMME?

- A formalised plan negotiated between the learner and teacher which enables individual learners with special needs to develop their knowledge and skills to meet their specific goals.
- A specific plan to enable the learner with special needs to gain access to, participate in, and benefit from, an overall curriculum/training programme.

WHAT IS IT FOR?

The development in the learner of:

- freedom of choice
- self-responsibility
- self-motivation
- self-discipline
- self-application
- self-organisation
- critical thinking
- the ability to communicate
- self-reliance
- independence

Ultimately, to develop the ability to use these skills within the context of living and working within the community.

It should be noted that these skills are often lacking in learners with special needs, particularly those with learning difficulties.

DEVISING INDIVIDUAL PROGRAMMES

Individual learning programmes:

- should be devised on the basis of an understanding of the precise needs, learning style (the way in which the person learns best), strengths and interests of the learner;
- specify the objectives and goals for the learner and the modifications based on individual learning needs;
- mean you must continuously monitor the learning process and make appropriate changes to the plan as required by the learner's growth and development;
- should *actively* involve the learner in devising the programme through a process of negotiation.

EXERCISE 2. NEGOTIATION

Individual activity

Stress has been placed on the need to involve the learner actively in devising an individual programme. This involves negotiation.

This exercise will help you to consider at this early stage the extent to which you can negotiate with learners and to identify which areas are open to negotiation and which are not. We will be returning to the negotiation process later in this element.

Tick the items in the list below, which you feel allow for negotiation. Put a cross beside those where no negotiation is possible.

- learning (or training) needs
- appropriate learning strategies
- learning outcomes
- assessment procedures
- individual timetables
- changes in direction or in programme
- learning agendas for learners

Whole group activity

Consider the outcomes as a whole group.

An outline for a discussion of the issue is given below.

DISCUSSION SHEET

You will probably have ticked most of the items noted above although learning outcomes may not be negotiable.

Learning needs

If teaching/training is to be based on individual plans, it is important for you to establish the learner's needs and for both of you to discuss them.

Appropriate learning strategies

On the basis of this discussion, it is possible to move on to the issue of suitable learning strategies. For example, recorded information, computer programs or text books may be used to reach a learning outcome.

Learning outcomes

These are not negotiable in many cases, often because they are predetermined by the funding agency. In some cases, where the outcomes are not predetermined, for example in non-certificated or non-examination work, negotiation may be possible.

Assessment outcomes

There is a limit to the negotiation possible in the area of assessment. However, some variation in procedures for assessment is acceptable. In some cases it is possible to use more than one method, such as written answers, multiple choice or use of a computer program or production of an article.

Individual timetables

This may well be possible. Not all courses or training programmes require linear progression. (This package, for example, is designed so that you can determine your own route through the material, at your own pace). You can draw up a timetable to take account of variations in pace.

Changes in direction or in programmes

Changes in direction or reshaping of the programme should be negotiated if the content is inappropriate or the outcomes are unrealistic for the learner.

Learning agendas for learners

Individual learning programmes require frequent monitoring to ensure that the intentions of both you and the learner can be made clear. The next steps in the course/training programme can then be negotiated.

2. STEPS IN DEVISING AN INDIVIDUAL PROGRAMME

Step 1 Collect and interpret information about the learner.
Step 2 Consider the course/training programmes, aims and objectives in the light of the learner's characteristics, interests and needs.
Step 3 Prepare a provisional plan in co-operation with all others who can give relevant information.
Step 4 Discuss the plan with the learner. Negotiate, then agree on a final plan and make a contract to meet it.
Step 5 Monitor progress. Make any necessary modifications to the plan through negotiation.

These steps form a cycle which will not be carried out only once, but which will need to be repeated throughout the course/training programme.

It will be helpful to look at these steps in detail:

STEP 1. COLLECTION AND INTERPRETATION OF INFORMATION

What are the main sources of information?

- the learner: application forms, interviews
- previous records
- previous teachers: information from school leavers' reviews and initial training in YTS
- parents/carers
- special staff

What kinds of information will it be useful to collect?

SIGNPOST

In Element 4, **Assessment and Review**, there is a detailed consideration of sources of information and initial assessment.

●●● EXERCISE 3. INFORMATION GATHERING

Small group activity

This activity will help you to identify the information necessary for an understanding of the learner's current knowledge, skills and aptitudes. Guard against a simple listing of what the learners *cannot* do, and worse still devising a programme comprised largely, or exclusively, of things the learner cannot do.

Form small groups.

Make a list of the kinds of information you need.

You may find it useful to use the following headings:

Current abilities
e.g. literacy level, courses taken

Interests
e.g. vocational

Physical skills
e.g. manipulative skills

Personal effectiveness/life skills
e.g. what will be the likely employment or life style of the learner?

●●●●

Whole group activity

Each group should report back on one of the four areas suggested. Additions may be made from the other groups to form a composite list.

The facilitator should ensure that the lists developed are *not* a plan for the course content.

HOW WILL YOU COLLECT THIS INFORMATION?

SIGNPOST

You will have been introduced to this in section 1 of the **Introductory Element**. It may be useful to have another look at this section.

Element 4, **Assessment and Review**, considers this in detail in the initial assessment section. You may which to work through the section now.

The learners will provide you with much of the information. It is valuable both to talk to the learners and observe them working. In order to do this you will need to devise appropriate activities to enable you to observe performance and discuss it with the learner.

You will need to look at any available records and arrange to talk to other people as appropriate.

HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY SPECIAL EDUCATION/TRAINING NEEDS?

Analysing needs

We have stressed the need for actively involving the learner in this process. One way of doing this, of identifying and analysing needs, parallels that already used in this pack. It was employed in order to help you to assess staff needs and was included in the user guide.

Here are some examples of how to do this.

The process involves exploring the learners' needs with them.

Ask the learners.

Using a simple proforma, you can ask the learners to identify:

- what they want to do, e.g. I would like to:
  - read
  - develop skills in x, y, z
  - use a calculator
- what they can do, e.g. I find the following:

	easy 1	2	3	difficult 4
answering the telephone	x			
estimating the cost of goods			x	

This information forms a basis, but needs to be supplemented by observation of performance. By setting tasks, you can judge aspects of performance such as literacy skills, manual dexterity, ability to concentrate, distractibility. From this you can derive a profile of the current range of abilities, which gives you a basis for negotiating the learning programme.

WHEN IDENTIFYING SPECIAL EDUCATION/TRAINING NEEDS, WHAT DO YOU LOOK FOR?

What obvious visual clues indicate possible special needs?

Examples include:

- use of wheelchair
- hearing aid
- sitting very close to a vdu screen

What other examples can you think of?

There are also more subtle clues which you need to pick up. This requires you to be sensitive and alert.

Examples include:

Relationships

- Does the learner interact successfully with others?
- Does he/she prefer to work alone?
- Does the learner tend to disrupt the activities of the group?

- Is the learner hostile, defensive, overtly aggressive or withdrawn? (This response may result from having been the butt of insulting remarks.)

Communicating

- Does the learner avoid volunteering?
- Does she/he work more slowly than others?
- Does she/he have problems with reading and writing?
- Does the learner often ask to have things explained?
- Does she/he strain to hear what you are saying?

Learning

- How does the learner approach tasks?
- If she/he has difficulties, *where* does the difficulty occur:
  - with reading the instructions?
  - with understanding instructions?
  - with translating the instructions into activity?
- How does the learner cope with difficulty?
  - Does he/she give up?
  - Does he/she persevere?
  - Is he/she easily distracted?
  - Does he/she try to overcome the difficulty alone?
  - Does he/she enlist the help of others?
- If the task involves a physical skill:
  - Does the learner show dexterity?
  - Does the learner appear clumsy?
  - How quickly is the task completed?
  - How accurately is the task completed?

EXERCISE 4. OBSERVATION CHECK-LIST

Small group activity

This activity will help you to formulate an observation check-list for use in your workplace.

Form small groups. It will be easier if you work in groups concerned with the same subject or teaching/training programme area.

Devise an observation check-list relevant to your work, using the questions given above and any others which are appropriate to your learners.

EXERCISE 5. RECORDING INFORMATION

Small group activity

How will you record this information so that it provides a useful working document for the next step?

This activity enables you to consider the best ways of recording the information you have obtained from various sources.

Guidelines for facilitators

You will need some examples of different formats for recording information and on the next pages you will find some which you may wish to use. It should be stressed that these are *not necessarily* representative of good practice. You may choose to use your own examples which are more relevant to your work or which would provide you with an appropriate basis for development.

Methods

Form small groups.

1. Examine each information sheet *critically*. What faults does it have?
2. Devise an information sheet which will suit your particular learners.

You should now have a useful tool for step 2.

Whole group activity

Feed back the results of each group's discussions.

Devise a list of features which should be *avoided*.

Examine the information sheets devised by each group. You may wish to revise your existing recording procedures in the light of this activity.

INFORMATION SHEETS

STUDENT DATA SHEET

Student's Name _____ School District _____

Vocational Studies Area _____ Date _____

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Address _____ Telephone _____

Grade _____ Date of Birth _____ Height _____ Weight _____

Male ____ Female ____ Spouse's Name _____ Occupation _____

Father's Name _____ Mother's Name _____

Father's Occupation _____

Mother's Occupation _____

HOME CONDITIONS (e.g., siblings, children, others in household, economic factors, language spoken in home):

_____

_____

HEALTH INFORMATION (e.g., immunization, special problems, allergies, physical/sensory impairment, self-care and coping skills):

_____

_____

Physical Specialist's Name _____

OTHER (e.g., character traits, personality traits, social behavior):

_____

_____

ACADEMIC INFORMATION (e.g., tests taken, math scores, reading scores, learning styles):

_____

_____

_____

EXTRACT FROM 'PROFILE STATEMENTS'

ATTENDANCE INFORMATION

	Year:	Grade:	Year:	Grade:
	1st Semester	2nd Semester	1st Semester	2nd Semester
Absences:				
Tardies:				

Remarks: _____

_____

VOCATIONAL INFORMATION (e.g., employment history, vocational interests, hobbies, special interests, special vocational talents, skills, work preference, work habits/attitudes):

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Remarks: _____

_____

_____

_____

SPECIAL SERVICES: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(From Bell, *Identify and Diagnose Exceptional Students*, AAVIM, 1984)

Name

Parents or Guardians

Tutor

KEY

✓ – Can do

P – Priority to work on

O – Wait

– – Not applicable

	Students	Parent(s)	Tutor
COMMUNICATION			
1. *Talking to people*			
1.1 Use sign language if I need to			
1.2 Speak clearly			
1.3 Talk so that others can understand me			
1.4 Talk and listen to other people			
1.5 Follow instructions and requests that I see or hear			
1.6 Tell others how I feel, what I need and what I think			
1.7 Be able to explain things			
1.8 Understand words used for doing different jobs such as woodwork or cooking			
1.9 Know what to do at an interview			
1.10 Use private and public telephones to phone friends and to make emergency calls			
2. *Reading and writing*			
2.1 Like looking at books and magazines, drawing, colouring and matching shapes			
2.2 Get help if I cannot read or write something			
2.3 Recognise my name and address			
2.4 Be able to read symbols and important words that I see in the community			
2.5 Follow drawn instructions			
2.6 Read simple pieces of writing for information			
2.7 Read newspapers, magazines and books to enjoy and get information			
2.8 Write letters that others can read			
2.9 Write my name, address and signature			
2.10 Fill in simple forms and write lists and messages to other people			
2.11 Write about anything I want to			
SOCIAL SKILLS			
3. *About myself*			
3.1 Know the names of parts of my body			
3.2 Know the difference between child, teenager, adult and old person			
3.3 Know what happens as the body changes			
3.4 Know the differences between men and women			
3.5 Say my name, age, address, phone number, religion, nationality, height and weight			
3.6 Know what I am good at and not so good at, and say what I think about things			

(From *New Directions*, FEU, 1988)

STUDENT INFORMATION SHEET

Learner's name _____ Course _____

YTS supervisor/individual tutor _____

Social worker _____ Doctor _____

Telephone number _____ Telephone _____

Starting date _____ Finishing date _____

INFORMATION FROM THE LEARNERS GAINED BY OBSERVATION AND DISCUSSION

Physical skills

Manual dexterity

Body co-ordination: walking, balance, etc.

Declared physical disabilities: If the learner is unwilling to declare her or his disability (and there is no other evidence to the contrary), we have to assume she or he is physically able as there will be no allowance made for her/him in the living and working community.

Personal effectiveness

Communication: Can the student be understood? With whom is the student most confident? Can she or he talk in a group?

Travel: Can the student:

- travel by bus/train?
- read a timetable?
- ask for information?
- travel on his/her own?

Money management: Can the student manage her/his weekly pay? Can he or she use a bank/PO/building society account? Does the student understand credit cards? Can he or she use a cash point?

Learning skills

Reading: Instructions, newspapers, trade names, etc.

Writing: Application forms, records, letters for information.

Numeracy: On buses, tell the time, basic arithmetic, measurement.

Computer skills: Use drill and practice programs, simulations, databases and word processing programs.

How does the student learn? In what situation does the learner learn the most.

Peer group: – Discussion
– Practical skills

Individual: – Reading/writing
– Following instructions

One to one: – Tutoring

Learner's interests

How does he or she spend free time?

Expand on each item, e.g.:

What does the student watch on the television?

Which music does the student like?

What books/magazines/comics does the student read?

School record

Which secondary school(s) did the student attend?

Useful comments from schools

Useful comments from the careers service

STEP 2. CONSIDER THE COURSE/TRAINING PROGRAMME AIMS AND OBJECTIVES IN RELATION TO LEARNER CHARACTERISTICS, NEEDS AND INTERESTS

This is the starting point for considering the individual modifications to make the programme appropriate to the learner.

WHAT ASPECTS OF YOUR COURSE/TRAINING PROGRAMME MIGHT YOU CONSIDER MODIFYING IN ORDER TO ACCOMMODATE INDIVIDUALS WITH SPECIAL LEARNING NEEDS?

The following list gives some clues:

- skills/content
- sequence
- timetabling
- learning activities/teaching methods
- learning resources
- managing the setting
- assessment procedures

Here are some examples related to each of these.

Skills

A learner with poor numeracy skills taking an office skills programme might concentrate on typing, filing and answering the telephone. Other skills such as bookkeeping may be inappropriate to the learner. Thus for such a learner *omission of skills* is required.

A learner who has a poor memory may benefit from a small-step approach in say the preparation of food (e.g. weighing, measuring, etc.). In this case the learner requires the *addition* of steps in order to develop skills.

Sequence

You may normally use a chronological order (e.g. first you... then you...). A learner who has difficulty in making such connections may benefit from starting with the most familiar skills. In other words you proceed from the simple to the complex, or from the known to the unknown.

A learner who has a history of failure will benefit from simple tasks which enable her or him to succeed. This influences self-image and motivation.

A group of learners presenting different needs can be encompassed in a group setting by using a variety of techniques suiting a cross-section of needs. Self-contained learning packages are also of value.

Timetabling

You may need to allow extra time for mastering new skills or material for some learners. Allow for fatigue.

Learning activities/ teaching methods

An alternative method may be necessary to cover the content of a field trip which a wheelchair user is unable to attend.

A learner who finds it hard to concentrate on her or his own work and is easily diverted from the task, may benefit from having work broken into small steps, at the end of which she or he receives reinforcement and reminders of what should be done next.

Learning resources

A learner who is a wheelchair user may require the height of a working surface to be adjusted.

A learner who has hearing impairment may need to be provided with a transcript of video or audio tapes watched by the group.

A learner with learning difficulties will require age-appropriate materials. This may mean that you need to seek out specially adopted materials, or in many instances adopt existing material/produce your own.

A learner who is visually impaired would benefit from having reading materials such as worksheets and hand-outs in large print.

A learner may require an interpreter for activities involving discussion.

A whole range of technical aids is available commercially, but simple adaptations can be made by use of the imagination.

Managing the setting

Placing slower learners with faster learners allows some mutual support and exchange to take place, enhancing the learning for all participants.

Setting up a variety of activities prevents those with short attention spans from becoming bored.

Assessment procedures

Written pen and pencil type tests or evaluation sheets may be inappropriate for some learners.

Discussion or question and answer assessments may be problematic for learners with speech difficulties.

●●● **EXERCISE 6. MODIFICATIONS TO MEET INDIVIDUAL NEEDS**

Small group activity

This activity will help you to consider how you might modify your course/training programme to cater for the special education/training needs of individuals.

Form small groups

1. On the next pages you will find extracts from lists of knowledge/skills required for various jobs, and vocational or core skills.

   Make a short list of knowledge/skills relevant to your own course/training programme.

2. You will need the case-studies: Chris, Gladstone, Ronke, Michael and Ivan (Characters 2,6,7,8 and 10 located in the Resources Section).

   For each learner, consider the lists of knowledge/skills needed to do a job (overleaf), and indicate where special arrangements would facilitate learning.

●●●● Each group should feed back their conclusions.

Whole group activity

INFORMATION SHEET 1
MODIFICATIONS SUPPORTING INFORMATION (1)

Food service worker

1. Deep-fat fry prepared foods.
2. Make salads.
3. Grill meats and sandwiches on counter grill.
4. Prepare milk shakes and sundaes using portion control and correct ingredients.
5. Serve appropriate food portions on plates for customers.

Childcare worker.

1. Help children to feed themselves.
2. Guide children in dressing themselves.
3. Direct children in organised play by teaching them how to play games, motivating their participation in the group, acting as referee and so on.
4. Prepare meals and snacks for young children.
5. Supervise young children during outdoor activities (e.g. playground, field trips, walks).

Merchandising

1. Check and order merchandise.
2. Arrange sales displays.
3. Demonstrate merchandise to customers.

4. Correct errors made on register.

Carpenter

1. Shape materials to prescribed measurements using saws, chisels and planes.
2. Study blueprints, sketches or building plans for information on required materials and dimensions of structure to be fabricated.
3. Verify trueness of structure with plumb bob and carpenter's level.

INFORMATION SHEET 2

MODIFICATIONS SUPPORTING INFORMATION (2)

(from *Core Skills in YTS Pt. 1* MSC, 1984)

Communication

6. Finding out information and interpreting instructions:
   - Find out information by speaking to other people.
   - Find out information from written sources.
   - Find out information by observing.
   - Interpret spoken instructions.
   - Interpret written instructions.
   - Find out the needs of other people in the workplace.
   - Find out the facts about things that have gone wrong.
   - Find out the needs of customers and clients.

Problem solving

10. Decision making: choosing between alternatives:
    - Decide what action is required.
    - Decide between alternative courses of action.
    - Decide how to make the best of an awkward situation.
    - Decide on a correct response when accidents and emergencies occur.

STEP 3. PREPARE A PROVISIONAL PLAN IN CO-OPERATION WITH ALL OTHERS WHO CAN GIVE RELEVANT INFORMATION

This is a relatively straightforward exercise, based on the information gathered from the first two steps.

You need to:

- establish the overall aims for the programme;
- derive specific objectives to meet those aims;
- identify the nature and use of appropriate support.

● ● ● EXERCISE 7. PREPARING A PROVISIONAL PLAN

Small group activity

This activity will enable you to prepare or adapt an individual programme plan.

Devise an individual programme plan to suit a learner on your course/training programme, or use one of the central characters from the previous activity.

STEP 4. DISCUSS THE PLAN WITH THE LEARNER. NEGOTIATE, THEN AGREE ON A FINAL PLAN AND MAKE A CONTRACT TO MEET IT

The central notion of this approach is that it is learner centred. There is no point in devising and imposing a plan on the learner; it must be developed and agreed by both the learner and the teacher, through a process of negotiation.

What is negotiation?

- a process involving two sides co-operating in a defined context;
- a means by which expectation and attitudes can be discussed;
- a way of making concessions and achieving agreement, and a commitment to a set of outcomes.

Who negotiates?

The learner must be able to make a contribution.

In order to do so, she or he will need to have the appropriate skills. You may need to structure opportunities for developing these skills.

The teacher must be willing and able to negotiate.

What skills are needed to negotiate?

There are three main elements:

1. The identification and communication of needs.
2. The making of choices.
3. The acceptance of the consequences of making decisions.

● ● ● EXERCISE 8. NEGOTIATION ROLE-PLAY

Small group activity

This activity enables you to consider the negotiation process and offers you an opportunity to practice your skills.

Form groups of three.

1. Either: Choose a learner you know and an existing individual programme plan.
   Or: Select one of the case-study characters (from the Resources Section) and the programme plan devised in Exercise 7.

SIGNPOST

Information on role plays will be found in section 3 of Element 5, **Training/ Teaching and Learning Strategies**.

2. Allocate roles. Identify one person as the learner, one person as the teacher or trainer, and the third person to observe and feed back.
3. The 'learner' and 'teacher/trainer' should spend a short time preparing and then, in role, should attempt to negotiate the programme plan.

   The observer should watch and use the following questions to monitor the process:

   - Is each person allowed to state his/her case?
   - Does each person listen to the other case?
   - Are concessions made on both sides?
   - Do they come to a shared understanding and final agreement? If not, why not?
4. Repeat the stages above changing roles twice so you all have an opportunity to try each role. You may choose to change the learner for each role-play.

● ● ● ●

Whole group activity

Discuss the outcomes from each group and identify those factors which enable the negotiation process.

Draw up a list of enabling factors.

WHAT IS CONTRACTING?

The formal agreement by both learner and teacher to a plan to achieve specified outcomes.

For contracting to work, the contract must be clear, simple and covering a few tasks only.

A reward should be identified. (This could be simply praise, or special responsibilities.)

The reward should be clearly defined and should be valued by the learner.

The relationship between task and reward should be clear.

The contract is improved if all parties sign and have copies of the clearly written or typed statement.

The first reward must always be obtainable.

●● EXERCISE 9. DEVISING A CONTRACT

Activity in pairs

This activity enables you to consider how to draw up a contract.

This activity may take the form of a role-play or discussion.

1. Choose a learner known to you, who has a clearly defined need or problem which could respond to a contract, e.g. arriving on time, completing tasks, paying attention to the job.
2. Identify the behaviour which you both agree needs to be changed. You may find that there are a number of areas which you wish to work on but you will need to select only one or two items to start with. As these are achieved, you can move on to new areas.
3. Identify appropriate rewards.
4. Formulate this as a statement of the task/action to be performed. State the number of times it should be performed successfully in order to obtain the reward.
5. Write the contract. Ensure that all the parties who will be involved in the contract are involved in drawing it up. In practice you will both need to sign the contract and to monitor and discuss progress. This will lead to adjustments, as appropriate.

●●●●

Whole group activity

Your establishment may have a policy on the negotiation and contracting process. Discuss the outcomes of the pairs activity, in relation to this policy.

If your establishment does not have a policy, you should draw up guidelines for using contracts.

STEP 5. MONITOR PROGRESS. MAKE ANY NECESSARY MODIFICATIONS TO THE PLAN THROUGH NEGOTIATION

The process of monitoring and negotiating is ongoing throughout the programme. It must ensure that the learner has an opportunity to express his/her views.

It allows you to:

- plan a balanced programme;
- ensure steady progression;
- provide for changes of direction.

In order to provide genuinely learner-centred learning, your negotiation of a programme must include regular monitoring of each learner's progress. The aim of this approach is to help the learner to develop self-reliance and independence in the learning process. Monitoring and reviewing progress may take place in a number of ways but you will be doing this informally, throughout the teaching/training. A small group or course team may have a system of regular meetings in order to do this, while larger groups may come together to review progress at predetermined stages as, for example, in YTS.

The process of monitoring should:

- involve the learners in their own learning;
- enable them to reflect on their experience;
- encourage them to see the application and transferability of their skills;
- enable progression, setting new goals and targets.

HOW DOES THIS WORK IN PRACTICE?

Monitoring and reviewing can take place at any stage during the programme. Here we look at some examples of its use at the stages listed below:

- at entry
- during the programme
- at the end

Some of the issues which may be raised *at entry*:

- The learner or parent may have unrealistic expectations, (for all learners, including those with special education/training needs, these may be too high or too low).
- The learner may not want the responsibility of making choices.
- The learner, or the employer, might not see the value of some parts of the programme.
- The employer may want content specific only to one occupation.
- The parent may be concerned about possible risks for the learner, e.g. working with machinery or going out alone.
- The staff member may want to restrict the learner to one area of content.
- The staff member may be concerned about safety with a disabled learner.

At this stage you are establishing an appropriate footing for the programme. Misunderstandings here can lead to much greater problems later on. It may involve explaining the purpose and value of some parts of the programme, and reconciling the needs and expectations of everybody involved.

During the programme:

SIGNPOST

The Element 8, **Guidance and Support,** deals with the development of these skills in detail.

Much of the monitoring process occurs informally. It involves providing feedback to the learner in a way which enables her or him to reflect on performance and suggest ways of improving it.

For example:

> A learner using a word processor finds the entire script is underlined. The teacher or trainer asks, 'Why do you think that has happened? How can you avoid it happening again?'
>
> A visually impaired learner is measuring wood and marking it for cutting out. The teacher or trainer might ask: 'How can you make marks which you can follow?' You could suggest: 'How can you produce marks you can feel?'

Other situations require a more structured approach, possibly on an individual basis. The sort of skills you require include:

- building a trusting relationship;
- giving guidance and support;
- identifying strengths and weaknesses;
- giving and receiving feedback.

●●● EXERCISE 10. MONITORING PROGRESS

Small group activity

This activity helps you to consider how you can monitor and discuss progress in a way which is positive and encourages the learner to be self-reliant rather than dependent on you for solutions.

Form small groups.

What approach would you adopt in monitoring and discussing progress?

Consider these suggestions:

Stage 1 – Identify what has been done well. This gives positive feedback and identifies strengths and achievements.

Stage 2 – Ask what is wrong and why. This involves the learner in his/her own review process.

Stage 3 – Ask what could be done to overcome the problem. This requires the learner to reflect on what she or he has done and learnt. You may need to add further supporting comments to prompt thinking.

Stage 4 – Agree on a new target which can be added to the individual programme plan. This ensures that the individual programme plan is a 'rolling' programme.

Now read through these examples.

(A) A learner with specific learning disabilities, who has extreme difficulty in reading even labels, has cooked a batch of fruit scones. They are well risen and the fruit is well distributed, but she or he has used salt instead of sugar.

(B) A learner who has found difficulty in working with others has started to contribute in group work. However, she/he still has problems in expressing ideas and getting them over to the group.

SIGNPOST

This is detailed in Element 4, **Assessment and Review.**

Now discuss the following with regard to both A and B

You want to encourage the learner to think about and monitor his or her own progress rather than relying on you for feedback and solutions.

How would you do this?
Make a note of your suggestions.

At the end

A final review involves helping the learner to recognise what has been achieved. It provides the basis for planning where to go next.

● EXERCISE 11. SUMMARY ACTIVITY

Individual activity

This exercise is designed to enable you to apply all of these steps in practice. You will appreciate that it cannot be completed in one go. You will need to carry it out over a period of time. You may find it useful to discuss progress on a regular basis.

Select a learner on your course/training programme.

Follow the steps outlined, up to and including step 3.

Draw up an individual programme plan.

●●●●

Discuss each of the individual programme plans drawn up. If the group is large you may prefer to divide into two groups.

Whole group activity

Each member should carry out step 4 with the learner.

You should arrange a follow-up session to discuss the outcomes.

The questions below will help you with this discussion.

- Is the learner the centre of that programme?
- Is the learner taking responsibility for learning?

- Have you used the expertise and knowledge of other agencies?
- Have you included other people in the team concerned with making provision for the individual learners?
- Have the programmes met the needs of individual learners?
- Is the programme realistic?
- Are you aware of the constraints of the programme?
- Have you tried to overcome these constraints?
- Is the programme clear? Can it be easily understood by the learner?
- Have you consulted the learner in devising the programme?
- Has the learner agreed to the programme?

SUMMARY

EVALUATION CHECK-LIST

Can you:

- describe a learner-centred approach?
- describe what an individual learning programme is for?
- outline the steps in devising an individual learning programme?
- collect and interpret information in order to devise an individual programme plan?
- describe ways of identifying special education/training needs?
- produce a format for identifying needs?
- describe appropriate ways of recording information?
- list a range of aspects of the course/training programme which may be modified?
- prepare provisional programme plans?
- define negotiation?
- involve the learner in the production of the plan, through negotiation?
- describe the contracting process and policy in your establishment?
- draw up appropriate contracts?
- monitor progress in a positive way, encouraging the learners to be actively involved?
- identify any skills you need to develop in order to devise effective individual learning programmes?
- devise a personal action plan to achieve this development?

SIGNPOSTS

Links to other elements include the following:

SIGNPOST

In Element 4, **Assessment and Review**, you will find a detailed consideration of sources of information and initial assessment.

SIGNPOST

Information on role- plays will be found in Section 3 of Element 5, **Training/ Teaching and Learning Strategies.**

SIGNPOST

Introductory Element, Section 1.

SIGNPOST

Element 8, **Guidance and Support**, deals with the development of skills of guidance and support.